

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

QUARTERLY

News Letter

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SPEAKING OF POSTWAR PLANS

SOON AFTER THE country was plunged into World War II, the Club's Directors met and considered the problem of how best to conduct its affairs during the period of the emergency. It was unanimously agreed that the only safe and prudent course would be to curtail our activities temporarily, and steps to bring that about were promptly taken. Accordingly for nearly four years we have operated on a sharply reduced schedule. Fewer books have been published and both prices and editions have been kept low. The News-Letter was issued at

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frequent intervals and the keepsake series—formerly completed within the calendar year—were spread over several years. Two factors influenced this decision: it was foreseen that the war would reduce both membership and income, and that shortages of materials and labor in the print shops would make production difficult and delivery dates uncertain.

In the light of events of the past four years it is now clear that this program was well advised. Because of it the Club successfully weathered the uncertainties of a critical period. Moreover, by far the greater part of the members remained on the roll, loyally supporting the organization during this period of comparative inactivity.

With the coming of victory and peace, however, the Directors believe the time has arrived to get back in stride, and for weeks past plans for a varied and active program have been under discussion. At this writing not all the projects are far enough advanced to permit their announcement. On the following pages, however, members will find an outline and description of several new and—we believe—uncommonly attractive activities scheduled for the immediate future. These may be regarded as a sort of preview of the Club's broadened postwar program.

MIDWINTER TRAGEDY

A HUNDRED YEARS ago this fall a party of about eighty emigrants pushed up the eastern slope of the Sierra, happy in the realization that their long

overland journey was nearing its end and that with reasonably good luck another ten days would see them safely on the far side of the mountains.

Spurred on by a natural eagerness to see this fabled California toward which they had been striving for so long—and spurred too by the knowledge that the season for mountain storms was fast approaching—the caravan moved briskly up the steep wooded canyons and, by late October, 1846, reached a beautiful sheet of water that today bears the name of the party's leader: Donner Lake.

There, however, the tragic hard luck that had plagued the expedition from its start dealt a climactic blow: a severe and prolonged blizzard set in and the group, unable either to proceed or to retrace its steps, had perforce to make camp and try to ride out the storm. What happened during the ensuing weeks while the wretched party, short of food, clothing, fuel, and shelter, waged a desperate struggle for survival, forms an epic of privation and courage unique in the annals of the West.

By way of commemorating the centenary of the ordeal of the Donner Party the Club will publish early next year *The Diary of Patrick Breen*—the only existing day-by-day account of what went on in the isolated camp during the long and terrible winter of 1846-47. Although the Breen Diary has been drawn on by numerous writers on the Donner Party, it has never heretofore been issued in complete, separate and properly annotated form; the Club therefore anticipates that its edition of 250 copies will be in brisk demand.

An announcement giving full details will be sent

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members shortly in advance of publication. Meantime the following information may be of interest:

The entire diary will be reproduced both in printed text and in facsimile—the latter by permission of the Bancroft Library, which owns the original.

The introduction, written by George R. Stewart, author of the most scholarly and readable of Donner Party histories, *Ordeal by Hunger*, stresses the importance of the diary and its author, traces the subsequent history of the diary, and corrects certain errors and misreadings in earlier printed versions. These textual comments are particularly interesting; they are embodied in a series of notes at the end of the book.

The Diary of Patrick Breen is being designed and printed at the L-D Allen Press, the same private press that produced *Heraldry of New Helvetia*, which the Club published earlier this year and which promptly went out of print. The present work is being printed from hand-set type on all-rag paper; it will be illustrated by one or more early lithographs, and the binding will be cloth of an appropriate design. The edition will be 250 copies and the price has been tentatively fixed at \$3.75. Publication date about March 1, 1946—exactly one hundred years after Patrick Breen made the final entry in his historic diary.

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

ON THE CALL of Flodden W. Heron, acting-president, a meeting of members was held at the

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Club's office, 1125 Russ Building, San Francisco, on the afternoon of June 13, 1945.

The first order of business was the reading of the report of the Nominating Committee. This committee, consisting of Lee L. Stopple, chairman, Edwin Grabhorn, and Edgar M. Kahn, presented the following slate of directors to serve for the year ending March 24, 1946:

Morgan A. Gunst
George L. Harding
Flodden W. Heron
Joseph Henry Jackson
T. M. Lilienthal
Edgar Waite
E. V. Weller

No other names being proposed, nominations were declared closed and a vote was taken, the seven above named being unanimously elected. The new board thereupon elected the following officers: President, Flodden W. Heron; Vice President, Morgan A. Gunst; Treasurer, George L. Harding; Secretary, Oscar Lewis.

Upon taking the chair, President Heron appointed the following to the two standing committees:

Publications: E. V. Weller, Joseph Henry Jackson, George L. Harding.

Membership: Morgan A. Gunst, T. M. Lilienthal, Edgar Waite.

Following the reading and adoption of a resolution endorsing the acts of the outgoing board and

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pledging a continuance and extension of the policies laid down by it, the meeting adjourned.

A CAMERA IN THE GOLD RUSH

WHEN THE HISTORY of pioneer photography in California comes to be written—as it must be soon; the story is an uncommonly interesting one, already too long neglected—the name of R. H. Vance will assume its rightful place among those who have helped preserve a visual record of the Gold Rush. Today Vance is almost entirely unknown even to specialists in the field of California's pictorial history, yet his studies of mining towns and camps, and of placer mining operations, have a documentary value in relation to the Gold Rush hardly less important than Brady's famous Civil War photographs.

A meticulous craftsman and—it is obvious—a tireless searcher after the picturesque, Vance roamed over much of California during the middle and late '50s, setting up the then crude and bulky apparatus of his trade and conscientiously preserving for posterity not only the unchanging scenic wonders of the state but villages, camps, and intricate mining operations long since vanished from eye and memory.

The Club was recently fortunate enough to come into possession of a portfolio of Vance's extraordinarily brilliant photographs, the record of a tour made probably in 1860 from San Francisco to the new silver mining regions of Nevada, via Vallejo, Sacramento, and the American River canyon.

From this group the Club has selected the twelve photographs that seem most valuable both from the

historical and artistic standpoints, and these it plans to reproduce and to distribute to the members in twelve monthly parts, beginning in January, 1946. The views—of towns, camps, placer, and quartz mining operations—will be mounted on folders, each with a facing page of text. In addition there will be a final folder, consisting of title-page and table of contents, together with a photograph of Vance and his staff, the whole to be distributed without cost to members.

Further details of this, the Club's eleventh series of keepsakes, will appear in the December News-Letter. Look for it.

MEMORIAL

ALFRED SUTRO, A charter member of the Club and its president since 1925, died on March 9, 1945. By his passing the Club lost a warm and valued friend whose interest in its welfare and support of its activities were generously given over a period of a third of a century. He served continuously on the Club's board of directors since its organization in 1912, and as vice president from 1914 to 1925. Upon the resignation of W. R. K. Young in the latter year, he assumed the presidency and during the twenty years he occupied that office he kept close and friendly watch over every phase of the Club's activities, ever willing to spare time from a busy professional life to consider Club problems and to initiate and carry through enterprises that would widen its usefulness and increase its prestige. The Club is fortunate indeed to have had the benefit

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of Alfred Sutro's wise and tempered counsel over so long a period.

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

The following names have been added to the roll since the appearance of the last issue of the News-Letter:

MEMBER:		SPONSOR:
Philip H. Angell	San Francisco, Cal.	Elizabeth Downs
Mrs. H. Glenn Bell	San Francisco, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
Phil K. Bekeart	San Francisco, Cal.	Flodden W. Heron
R. H. Cross	San Francisco, Cal.	John Howell
Morgan J. Doyle	San Francisco, Cal.	Flodden W. Heron
Philip G. Duffy	Larkspur, Cal.	George Fields
Dr. William M. Fitzhugh	San Francisco, Cal.	Ira S. Lillick
Walter A. Gabriel	San Francisco, Cal.	Mrs. Max. M. Cohn
Augustus Guy	Berkeley, Cal.	Elizabeth Downs
Lowell E. Hardy	Piedmont, Cal.	H. S. Allen
Gregory A. Harrison	San Francisco, Cal.	John D. McKee
Harold C. Holmes	Oakland, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
Lt. Herman W. Kapp	Seattle, Wash.	Oscar Lewis
Jesse W. Lilienthal	San Francisco, Cal.	T. M. Lilienthal
Dr. George D. Lyman	San Francisco, Cal.	Morgan A. Gunst
David Magee	San Francisco, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
Dr. George Martyn	Los Angeles, Cal.	Flodden W. Heron
Malcolm T. Macauley	San Francisco, Cal.	Flodden W. Heron
Dr. Harry W. Plath	Piedmont, Cal.	Harold Holmes
Milton S. Ray	San Francisco, Cal.	Flodden W. Heron
Harry L. Simpson	Piedmont, Cal.	Flodden W. Heron
Mrs. E. M. Snowden	San Francisco, Cal.	John Howell
Mrs. Louis Stern	Palo Alto, Cal.	George L. Harding
Keith Spalding	Pasadena, Cal.	James R. Brehm
Mrs. Louis Stern	Palo Alto, Cal.	George L. Harding
Edmond C. Travis	San Anselmo, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
James E. Waite	San Francisco, Cal.	Edgar Waite
Dr. George A. Williamson	Salem, Ore.	Oscar Lewis
Lt. Walter F. Willmette	Mill Valley, Cal.	H. S. Allen

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In addition, the following former Regular Members have been elected to Life Membership:

C. O. G. Miller

San Francisco, Cal.

James K. Moffitt

San Francisco, Cal.

Mrs. John I. Walter

San Francisco, Cal.

There are now some 350 Regular Members on the roll, and nine Life Members. Within the next few months the Membership Committee hopes to make further substantial increases in both classifications. The committee believes that the Club's newly expanded publishing program—some details of which are announced on these pages—will presently bring the membership up to and beyond prewar levels. However, in order as promptly as possible to add another hundred Regular Members to the roll, the Directors have authorized the committee to make the following special offer:

The Club has on hand slightly more than one hundred copies of one of its most interesting and desirable publications: An Original Issue of *The Spectator*. This work, printed by The Grabhorn Press in 1939 and priced at \$6.00, consists of an essay on Addison and Steele by Eric Partridge; in addition there is bound into each copy an authentic issue of their famous 18th century paper. One hundred copies of this work have been set aside for the use of the committee: one copy will be presented entirely free of charge to each of the first hundred new members added to the roll. Members who have friends who wish to participate in this attractive and necessarily limited offer are urged to propose their names promptly, for it seems likely that the sup-

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ply of copies available for this purpose will be speedily exhausted.

PUBLICATIONS

The following Club publications are in stock and available to the members:

THE BEAUTIES OF BOSWELL, by Thomas Rowlandson. Ten color reproductions in a portfolio. The Grabhorn Press, 250 copies. \$6.

AN ACCOUNT OF A VISIT TO CALIFORNIA IN 1826-27, by Captain F. W. Beechey. The Grabhorn Press, 350 copies. \$8.

BALLADES OF EL DORADO, selected by Earle V. Weller. An anthology of early California ballads. The Ward Ritchie Press, 300 copies. \$3.

FIRE AND OTHER POEMS, by D. H. Lawrence. Introduction by Robinson Jeffers. The Grabhorn Press, 300 copies. \$3.50.

AN ORIGINAL ISSUE OF THE SPECTATOR. With an essay on Addison, Steele and The Spectator by Eric Partridge. The Grabhorn Press, 450 copies. \$6.

THE HELMET OF MAMBRINO, by Clarence King, with an introduction by Francis Farquhar. University of California Press, 300 copies. \$.67.

LILITH, by George Sterling. A narrative poem. Taylor & Taylor, 350 copies. \$2.

CONTINENT'S END: An Anthology of Contemporary California Poets. John Henry Nash, 600 copies. \$5.

THE FINAL STANZA, by Lewis Browne. A chapter in the life of Heine. Johnck & Seeger, 300 copies. \$1.17.

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THE PERSISTENCE OF POETRY, by Witter Bynner. Poetry's place in the modern world. The Windsor Press, 300 copies. \$2.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, by John Buchan and William C. Van Antwerp. Johnck & Seeger, 300 copies. \$1.

BIERCE AND THE POE HOAX, by Carroll D. Hall. A San Francisco literary hoax of the '90s. The Windsor Press, 250 copies. \$1.

MISCELLANY

For those members who long ago placed orders for slipcases for one or another of the keepsake series, the Club has a word of cheer. Leather and binding cloth of the kind and color used on the cases will, we are informed, be manufactured soon. Once these become available, production of the cases will proceed at once.

Since the last issue of the News-Letter, three Club publications have gone out of print: Odes & Sonnets by Clark Ashton Smith (printed by Taylor & Taylor), Cato's Moral Distichs (The Ward Ritchie Press) and Heraldry of New Helvetia, (The L-D Allen Press). The last named was issued in March of this year and completely sold out within two weeks of publication.

At this writing two of the Club keepsake series remain incomplete: California on Canvas—of which eight of twelve parts have been issued—and Guardians of the Pacific, with three parts still to come. The Club plans to complete the latter series during the current year. Completion of California on Canvas will however have to wait until paper stock of the weight and quality of the earlier parts is again manufactured.

Negotiations are now under way for the Club's 1945 Christmas publication. All details cannot yet be announced but this much may be said: It will be an outstanding item of California and the most ambitious publishing venture the Club has

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undertaken in five years. The edition will be 300 copies and the printer The Grabhorn Press. An announcement will be forthcoming soon.

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA, founded in 1912, is a non-commercial, non-profit association of booklovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast literature and fine printing.

Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors in the West, to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books, and to enhance the pleasures that come from their collection and study. These aims find expression in the following activities.

PUBLICATIONS: The Club publishes two or three books a year, in editions of from 250 to 350 copies, which are sold at cost, and only to members. The publications are selected examples of the work of the foremost fine printers of the West. **KEEPSAKES:** Each year the Club issues and distributes to members a series of keepsakes, in six or twelve parts, each of which is designed by a different Pacific Coast Printer. **NEWS-LETTER:** This quarterly keeps members informed of Club activities and presents in each number brief papers on various phases of book collecting, with special reference to the interests of Western collectors. The News-Letter, like the keepsakes, is supplied without cost to the members.

The Club is limited to six hundred members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular Membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues of \$10.00, there being no initiation fee. Dues date from the month of the member's election.

The Club's policies and activities are governed by a board of directors, elected annually. The present officers and directors are: Flodden W. Heron, President; Morgan A. Gunst, Vice-President; George L. Harding, Treasurer; Oscar Lewis, Secretary; Joseph Henry Jackson, T. M. Lilienthal, Edgar Waite, E. V. Weller, Directors.